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Election Night's Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotions in Political Participation

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A large literature has established a persistent association between the skills and resources citizens possess and their likelihood of participating in politics. However, the short-term motivational forces that cause citizens to employ those skills and expend resources in one election but not the next have only recently received attention. Findings in political psychology suggest specific emotions may play an important role in mobilization, but the question of "which emotions play what role?" remains an important area of debate. Drawing on cognitive appraisal theory and the Affective Intelligence model, we predict that anger, more than anxiety or enthusiasm, will mobilize. We find evidence for the distinctive influence of anger in a randomized experiment, a national survey of the 2008 electorate, and in pooled American National Election Studies from 1980 to 2004.

In both 2004 and 2008, pundits, journalists, and politicians announced that emotions were running high as the election approached.[1] Media invocations of emotion during elections—the anger, anxiety, and enthusiasm that mounts as partisans join the fray—is nothing new. The language of emotion, particularly anxiety and anger, is omnipresent come election season as pundits editorialize on the nation's "mood." The widespread dissemination of opinion polls highlighting the negative emotional state of the electorate likely reinforces this tendency. For example, the 2004 election was thought to hinge not simply on the balance of issue preferences in the populace, but on whether Democrats would be angry enough to out mobilize Republicans and vote President George W. Bush out of office. The Republican strategy was to shift attention to other issues, such as gay marriage, that could be used to counter the powerful negative emotions generated by thoughts of the wars. Before the campaign of 2008, Americans became increasingly

frustrated with two wars and a deepening global economic crisis. Candidates often utilize emotional rhetoric, accusing each other of "fear mongering" in order to scare people away from politics (Gore 2007). However, enthusiasm also makes regular appearances in campaign communication (Brader 2006)—as was particularly evident in the 2008 Obama campaign.

The news media's focus on the emotional climate during campaigns is often rooted in subjective, anecdotal impressions. However, some systematic data are available. The American National Election Studies (ANES) have measured the public's emotions toward the major parties and their candidates since 1980, using the question "Has (Democratic or Republican candidate)—because of the kind of person he is, or because of something he has done—ever made you feel (angry, afraid, proud, hopeful)?" The trend over time is presented in Figure 1.[2] Emotions toward Democrats (Figure 1A) and Republicans (Figure 1B) fluctuate quite a lot, suggesting some candidates, in some

[2]The figure takes the average of "proud" and "hopeful" responses toward both candidates as a measure of general enthusiasm and compares it to the results for anger and anxiety. The NES item mentions fear, but we use fear and anxiety interchangeably, consistent with others (Brader 2006; Marcus et al. 2000).

political climates, trigger particular emotions more strongly than others.

Despite the prevalence of emotion in popular discussions of electoral mobilization, the vast literature on political participation does not include such forces in causal models. Instead, explanations of participation focus on concrete, stable skills and resources. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) proposed a basic resource model (BRM) of participation that includes education, income, age, and other demographics. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) reframed the basic question of participation to ask: why *don't* people participate in politics? They reaffirm the earlier finding that those lacking resources are far less likely to become involved in politics because they *cannot.* To this they add that some people are not predisposed to participate because they are not *engaged* in politics. Finally, consistent with Rosenstone and Hansen's (1993) thesis, they note that many do not participate because they have not been *asked* to do so, i.e., they have not been mobilized. Their Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) thus incorporates mobilization and factors that motivate habitual engagement into the BRM.[3]

The prevailing explanation of participation—focusing especially on stable and long-term material resources, skills, interests, and mobilization strategies—explains substantial variance in participation. However, participation at the individual level varies a substantial bit more from election to election than do the predictive factors in these models. Why do some people with the resources and skills to participate in every election only utilize those resources some of the time?

To explain changes in turnout from election to election, we need a more dynamic element, one that can help us understand the *short-term motivation* to use those skills and resources in some elections but not others. While the CVM considers motivational forces, these are still stable predispositions to engage in politics, operationalized as a combination of interest in "national and local politics and affairs" (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, 346), efficacy, information, and party identification strength. To the degree that such predispositions evolve over time, these changes are likely to be slow as a result of long-term socialization patterns—a dynamic quite distinct from the erratic fluctuations we see in participation from one election cycle to the next.

[3]Engagement in the CVM is a long-term stable predisposition, not a temporary state. Therefore, it is not likely to change significantly during any given campaign. This conception is distinct from the experience of particular emotions we explore in this paper.

The emotional variation in Figure 1, therefore, is intriguing as a potential explanation for participation above and beyond the more stable factors in the CVM. This paper explores the role of emotions in political participation by focusing on their *short-term* motivational effects. Why is participation so much higher in some election years than in others? We believe that the answer lies, at least in part, in the emotions generated by the campaign. Variation in emotional responses to candidates, however, is not proof that they play a causal role in participation. Moreover, we do not know whether all emotions operate in the same way.

Political scientists have begun to investigate short-term forces that affect the motivation to act. Much of this work focuses on "threat," generally defined as any risk of future harm either material or symbolic. Threats about unwanted policy change seem to boost participation among affected sectors of the public, as long as they have sufficient resources to mobilize (Campbell 2003; Miller and Krosnick 2004). Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Wu (2006) also show that socioeconomic status boosts participation most powerfully in the presence of an external threat. The current paper builds on these observations by exploring which *specific* emotions deriving from political threats prompt mobilization most powerfully. Anger, for reasons we will explain below, should consistently boost participation. The impact of anxiety, on the other hand, may produce different effects under different circumstances.

Our primary goal is to build emotion into the standard resource model of political participation. In order to do this, we draw on both Affective Intelligence Theory (AIT) (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000) and cognitive appraisal theory (Folkman et al. 1986; Lazarus 1991; Lerner and Keltner 2000, 2001). Each of these theories addresses a slightly different set of emotional processes that may explain political participation: The neuroscientific approach that informs AIT focuses on the immediate, preconscious impact of emotional reactions, while cognitive appraisal theory focuses on the subsequent cognitive evaluations of these immediate reactions. While both theories suggest anger and enthusiasm should be mobilizing under many conditions, they make different predictions about the impact of anxiety on political participation.

Positive versus Negative Emotions and their Effects on Behavior

Research in neuroscience emphasizes the automatic and even preconscious role of emotion in structuring

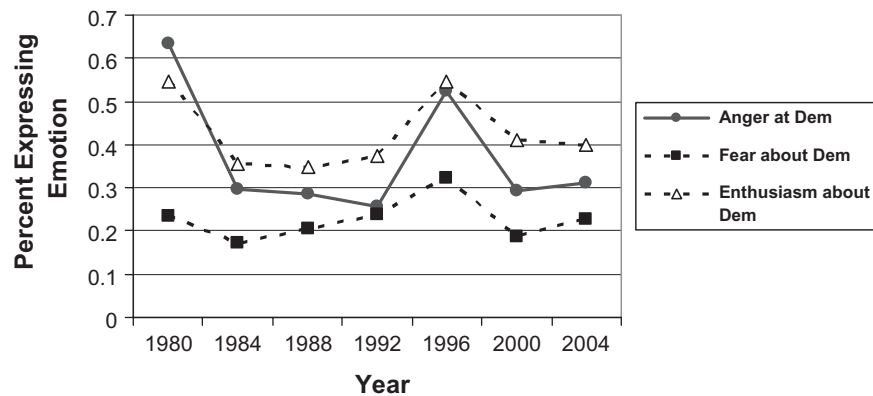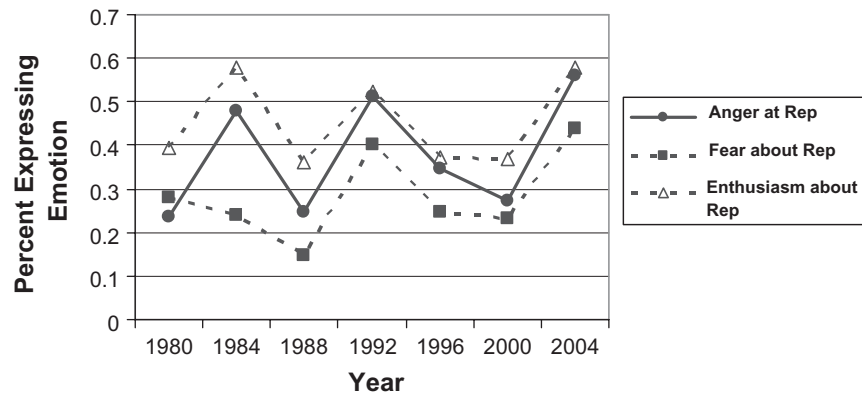FIGURE 1A   Emotions toward Democratic Candidates

FIGURE 1B   Emotions toward Republican Candidates

cognition (Damasio 1994; Gray 1990). Damasio discovered that emotions, both positive and negative, can improve decision making. Our brains use emotions to rapidly register and signal the positive and negative implications of alternative courses of action, thereby narrowing behavioral choices to a feasible number and giving us a "gut feeling" about the best way to proceed. Gray (1990) argues that positive and negative emotions serve as feedback from brain systems that encourage reward-seeking ("approach") and danger-averting ("avoidance") behavior, respectively. Either of these states might lead to action, since the awareness triggered by negative emotional states might trigger behavioral strategies designed to deal with the threat.

Theories about the role of emotions in political behavior draw heavily on these ideas and focus primarily on one set of positive emotions and one set of negative emotions (Marcus et al. 2000). Drawing on Gray (1987) in particular, AIT (Marcus et al. 2000)

contends that positive and negative emotional states trigger distinct cognitive strategies for dealing with the environment. Enthusiasm results when goals are being met, and thus reinforces existing behaviors and attitudes (the *dispositional* system). Anxiety is caused by novel or unexpected stimuli that suggest danger or the potential for negative outcomes. Anxiety thus triggers attention to the environment and disrupts reliance on well-rehearsed patterns of behavior (the *surveillance* system). The theory suggests both systems boost participation.

Interest in the political impact of emotion led to the inclusion of several items in the ANES time series in 1980 that have become important for the current debate (Abelson et al. 1982). Although multiple emotions were measured, most analyses found the ANES items loaded on two dimensions, one dominated by positive emotions and one dominated by negative emotions (Abelson et al. 1982; Marcus 1988; Marcus and MacKuen 1993). Measures of fear and

anger were highly correlated, in survey after survey. Studies have found that anger and anxiety load on a common dimension (using factor analysis) and have similar effects on political judgment and learning. Therefore the standard practice in political science has been to combine them (Marcus and MacKuen 1993, Marcus et al. 2000; Rudolph, Gangl and Stevens 2000; Rahn, Kroeger, and Kite 1996; Brader, Valentino and Suhay 2008). Additional support for grouping negative emotions comes from the finding that emotional responses exhibit a two-dimensional "circumplex" structure (Plutchik 1980; Russell 1980; Zevon and Tellegen 1982). Multidimensional scaling of a large number of emotional stimuli tends to yield two dimensions—positive and negative—each varying from low to high arousal.

Discrete Emotions: Cognitive Appraisal Theories of Emotion

Despite the promise of these first attempts to explain variation in political attention, vote choice, and participation using the dual process model of emotions, there are good reasons to move beyond the emphasis on automatic responses to positive (enthusiasm) versus negative (anxiety) emotions. First, public opinion surveys capture conscious emotional responses that are generated or sustained by conscious appraisals, and such responses are likely to be highly relevant as individuals *decide* whether and how to participate in politics. Cognitive appraisal theories of emotion suggest that individuals take deliberate actions in order to cope with their emotions (Folkman et al. 1986; Lazarus 1991). And "cognitive tuning" theories tell us that individuals look to their emotions to provide them with information as they evaluate the world around them and decide how to act (Isbell, Ottati, and Burns 2006; Ottati, Terkildsen, and Hubbard 1997; Rahn 2000, Schwarz 2002; Schwarz and Clore 1983).

Second, although there is often a substantial correlation between self-reported anxiety and anger; anxiety and anger have distinct *causes* (Averill 1982; Brader, Groenendyk, and Valentino 2010). Cognitive appraisal theories of emotion argue that anger and anxiety derive from different relationships between the individual and her environment (Lazarus 1991; Roseman 1991; Smith and Ellsworth 1985; Smith and Kirby 2004). Threats and rewards are appraised differently depending on the person and the context. The experience of a particular emotion depends on this primary appraisal. The appraisals of *attribution and control* in the face of an environmental threat trigger anger or anxiety distinctly (Lerner and Keltner 2000, 2001 Smith and Ellsworth 1985). Anger arises when threats are attributable to a particular source and the individual feels that she has control over the situation, while anxiety is triggered when an individual is less certain about the cause and does not feel in control (Lerner and Keltner 2000, 2001; Smith and Kirby 2004; Tiedens and Linton 2001).

When it comes to the effects of these emotions on political participation, the two classes of emotion theories provide us with potential insight. Neuroscience based approaches, including AIT, highlight similarities between anger and anxiety. Novel threats trigger the body's surveillance system via these emotions (Gray 1990; Marcus et al. 2000).[4] On the other hand, cognitive appraisal theories tell us that anger triggers risk-seeking behavior (Lerner and Keltner 2000, 2001) and problem-focused coping (Folkman et al. 1986), while anxiety leads to risk avoidance (Lerner and Keltner 2000, 2001) and emotion focused coping (Folkman et al. 1986).

We hypothesize that anxiety may provoke an immediate reflexive response by signaling to the individual that something is wrong (Marcus et al. 2000). However, in addition to the sort of automatic response mechanism posited by AIT, individuals may cope with their anxiety indirectly through emotion-focused avoidance behavior rather than attacking the problem at hand (Folkman et al. 1986). In other words, anxiety prepares the body to act, but anxious individuals may shrink from action (Lerner and Keltner 2000, 2001) because they lack a sense of control and are unable to attribute blame (Smith and Ellsworth 1985). This might be especially true when significant resources are at risk. This means that attention might be triggered by anxiety, but behavioral coping might be just as likely through distancing and avoidance rather than attacking the problem head on (Folkman et al. 1986). In the realm of politics, therefore, we might expect anxiety fails to motivate costly political action. On the other hand, automatic physiological responses triggered by anxiety (Marcus et al. 2000) may stimulate low cost, expressive actions. This type of action is also consistent with certain types of emotion-focused coping such as social support seeking and discussion of one's fears with family and friends (Folkman et al. 1986).

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[4]Marcus and colleagues speculate that in cases where threats are familiar, fear and anger function differently. In such cases, anger is expected to work similarly to enthusiasm.

Therefore, anxiety is likely to have mixed effects on participation—perhaps having little effect on costly forms of participation but boosting low cost, expressive acts. Political expression has been shown to correlate with anxiety in surveys (Marcus et al. 1993; Rudolph et al. 2000).

Consistent with these insights from the appraisal approach, there is growing evidence that anxiety and anger have distinct *political* effects (Isbell, Ottati, and Burns 2006). For example, Marcus (2002) speculates that "aversion," which includes anger, may have different effects than does anxiety on political interest and motivation. Some evidence suggests that aversion is triggered by conflict over familiar and disliked groups or issues, which subsequently undermines new information seeking. Anxiety, on the other hand, seems to trigger deeper and more deliberative information search (MacKuen, Wolak, Keele, and Marcus 2010). Weber (2008) finds that anxiety increases information seeking and engagement, while anger boosts political efficacy. Anger in politics, therefore, may be the key to the development of a habit of participation: When an angry citizen participates in politics and that action is viewed as successful, efficacy increases (Valentino, Gregorowicz, and Groenendyk 2009).

Anger and anxiety also have different impacts on the perceived risk of, and support for, the Iraq war (Huddy, Feldman, and Cassese 2007). Anxiety about a wide variety of actors and events linked to the Iraq war is positively correlated with perceived risk and negatively associated with war support. Anger toward these attitude objects shows the opposite pattern, producing higher levels of support and depressing perceptions of the risk of the war. Anxiety leads to deeper processing of available political information, boosting information seeking and learning. When counterattitudinal information is useful to the individual, anxiety may reduce selective exposure (Valentino et al. 2009). Anger may also reduce the quantity, and perhaps the quality, of political information seeking (Valentino et al. 2008).

Both neuroscience and cognitive appraisal theories also expect positive emotions like enthusiasm to boost participation. Carver (2004) notes that both anger and enthusiasm are guided by the same underlying system, labeled the "Behavioral Approach System" (BAS), which governs many behavioral response tendencies. As initially conceptualized by Gray (1987), the BAS system monitors the individual's distance from desired goals and is only related to positive emotions (the closer you get to a desired goal, the more positive you feel). Carver, however,

argues that the BAS can lead to either positive or negative emotions, depending on whether progress toward the goal is faster or slower than expected. If we reach our goals more quickly than expected, we experience enthusiasm. If we reach our goals as quickly as we expect to, we experience no emotion. If progress toward our goals is slower than expected, we experience frustration and anger. Anger and enthusiasm, then, both lead us to take action in order to achieve or preserve goals. Those who are angry may struggle even harder to reach a positive outcome. Those who are enthusiastic may also take positive action to continue their success, though the effect may be weaker than is the case for anger.

These insights contribute to our view that short-term motivations for participating in politics may stem from challenging and often emotionally powerful events or trends. Under some circumstances, individuals may react impulsively as a result of the anxiety they feel in response to threatening political stimuli. However, most of the time, political participation requires substantial deliberation, especially if it involves the expenditure of scarce resources such as time or money. Most of the time, we must *choose* to participate in politics, and we suspect anger and enthusiasm, more than fear or anxiety, are likely to push us to that choice.

Hypotheses

Since the disparate theories of emotion reviewed above converge on the idea that anger and enthusiasm lead to action, we expect the experience of these emotions to mobilize citizens to participate in politics.

> *H1*: Anger and enthusiasm mobilize participation.

In contrast, anxiety should have weaker effects on participation and should produce no powerful mobilizing or demobilizing effects across the board. Anxiety may, however, trigger less costly and more expressive types of participation.

> *H2*: Anger and enthusiasm mobilize all forms of participation, but anxiety will affect only the least costly forms.

In a cross-sectional survey we must test for the impact of emotions above the impact of the CVM. If we could not control for material resources, interests, skills, and mobilization, we would worry that emotions were merely indicators of those more fundamental causes of participation. On the other hand, if emotional reactions to politics affect participation rates even

after the CVM is controlled, then we can be more confident that they represent an important addition to the existing model.

> *H3*: Emotions affect participation independent of resources captured by the CVM.

Our theory does not suggest anger or enthusiasm can *replace* resources; these emotions merely stimulate their expenditure. In the case of political participation, the decision on how to act should be informed by the resources a person has available. As suggested above, cognitive appraisal theorists contend that once an emotion is experienced, an individual will perform a secondary appraisal to determine the best course of action (Folkman et al. 1986). Anger and enthusiasm, in particular, should spur a person to put his or her resources on the line given its association with optimistic risk assessments. Anxiety should not interact with resources since any positive effect it has on participation should be confined to low-cost acts.

> *H4*: Anger and enthusiasm, but not anxiety, interact with resources to boost participation.

In summary, we believe these insights about emotions and the CVM can be combined into a single model that produces powerful predictions about the short-term motivation to expend resources for political action. While resources are critically important predictors of participation, they are mostly stable over time: Those with resources, both cognitive and material, in one election tend to be those with resources in the next. Emotions help to explain short-term motivations: why some people with resources choose to expend them and some do not in a given election. In the presence of anger and enthusiasm, resources should be used more aggressively. Anxiety should be less mobilizing, especially of more costly forms of participation, because this emotional state often triggers risk aversion and, sometimes, withdrawal. We do not think short-term anger or enthusiasm is *necessary* for political participation. The combination of anger or enthusiasm and resources, however, is a potent one, boosting participation above that which we would expect should result from resources alone.

Study 1: Experimental Manipulation of Emotion

Our goal is to identify the causal impact of specific emotional states on political participation. Most work to date on this topic relies on survey data. Causal direction, however, is always open to question in these studies. It is plausible that what we have deemed the *effect* of emotions (participation) may actually be their cause. For example, a person might infer or rationalize her emotional state from her actions (Bem 1972). Once one commits time, energy, and resources to participating in an election, one might conclude they feel strong emotions about it. A related possibility is that the activities in which one participates may stir up emotions directly. Finally, emotions and participation could both be caused by a third variable such as attention or engagement with a particular election, rendering their association spurious. Such alternatives must be ruled out in order for us to have confidence in our causal explanation. For this, we turn first to an experiment to induce distinct emotions independently, to see if they lead to different political action.

We employed an emotion induction task to heighten specific emotional states in randomly assigned groups of participants. The experiment was conducted on the campus of the University of Michigan from October 12 through November 1, 2004. The final sample of 411 participants is not representative of the nation, but it captures variation in race (38% non-White) and gender (57% women). Republicans are underrepresented (19%). There were no significant differences in sociodemographics or partisanship across cells of the design. By randomly assigning individuals to a task that triggers each emotion, we can estimate the independent impact of emotional states on participation.

Subjects were recruited with flyers in the downtown area near campus, including local businesses and university office buildings. In exchange for their participation in a ''public opinion survey,'' subjects received $10. The entire study took place on the computer. Before the emotional manipulation, a pretest questionnaire was administered containing questions about media exposure, partisanship, and political efficacy. Next, subjects were randomly assigned to one of three emotion induction conditions—anger, anxiety, enthusiasm—or a control group.

To induce an emotional state, subjects were asked to recall and write about something that caused them to experience a specific emotion during the current campaign. This is a slight modification of a common technique used by social and cognitive psychologists studying emotion (Bower 1981; Lerner and Keltner 2001 Isbell and Ottati 2002). The primary benefit of this type of manipulation is that it allows us to activate fear and anger independently. This can be

quite difficult to do using music, video clips, or other more complex stimuli. A key reason for this is that emotional responses depend not only on the features of such stimuli, but also on how individuals appraise the stimuli in relation to their own situation (Lerner and Keltner 2001). For example, threatening stimuli simultaneously elicit fear in some people, anger in others, and a mix of both emotions in still others. In light of all this, we adopt a "purer" form of manipulation. This technique more reliably generates the specific emotional response(s) of interest across subjects by prompting them to focus explicitly on that particular emotion (e.g., through imagining or "reliving" concrete situations in which they have felt the emotion strongly).

Subjects were given the following task: "Now we would like you to describe something during the current campaign that made you feel (angry/afraid/enthusiastic). Please describe how you felt as vividly and in as much detail as possible. Think about the candidates running for office, the issues in this year's election, and world events. Examples of things that have made some people feel (anger/afraid/ enthusiastic) are statements made by candidates, speeches given during party conventions, and things said during the debates. It is okay if you don't remember all the details, just be specific about what exactly it was that made you (angry/afraid/ enthusiastic) and what it felt like to be (angry/afraid/enthusiastic). Take a few minutes to write out your answer."

In the control condition, respondents wrote about something that recently made them feel "relaxed." We use this "relaxed" prompt so that all subjects (treatment and control) would engage in the same task, with only the emotion varied. The emotion prompt requires self-reflection, time, and energy. All of these factors could in theory affect participatory intentions, but they have nothing to do with emotions per se. By forcing the control group to engage in the same exercise but without any emotion, we standardize the experience. Response length ranged from 0 to 336 words with a mean length of 74 words.

To test whether or not the manipulation was effective, two graduate research assistants coded the intensity of emotion expressed in the open-ended responses from no emotion, to somewhat intense emotion, to very intense emotion. Coders were blind to condition assignment and our hypotheses. The results are presented in the appendix. The procedure was successful. Coders easily identified the dominant emotion expressed in each response with intercoder agreement exceeding 95% for all conditions. How-

ever, while anger occurred most strongly in the anger condition, it was also expressed modestly in the anxiety and enthusiasm conditions. Further, a tiny amount of anxiety was expressed in the anger condition. While these deviations from a perfectly independent induction are not ideal, they make for a more conservative test. If despite the modest co-occurrence of anxiety, anger still uniquely boosts participation, our inference is strengthened. After the procedure, subjects were allowed to seek political information and answer questions about their intentions to participate.[5]

Despite the overlap in emotion identified in our analysis of the intensity of emotional expression, we still find quite strong differences in the participation intentions across discrete emotional conditions. We present these results in Table 1. The dependent variable is a 5-point index of political participation which sums the total number of acts that a respondent is willing to engage in, including wearing a campaign button, volunteering for a campaign, attending a rally, talking to others, or donating money. Independent variables (emotions) are dummies for experimental condition, not the results of the manipulation check described above. We find anger, but not anxiety or enthusiasm, significantly boosts participation. Anger boosts participation by nearly one third of an act. This result confirms one of our expectations—that anger will be mobilizing but anxiety will not. Enthusiasm's impact was positive but not statistically significant.

Study 2: 2008 Election Study

In order to generalize these results to politics outside of the lab, we next turn to a national survey conducted during the 2008 campaign. We conducted a panel survey through Knowledge Networks immediately before and after the 2008 election. Knowledge Networks recruits participants through random digit dialing in order to create a large participant pool from which to sample for any given study. After agreeing to participate in the Knowledge Networks pool, respondents are provided with free Internet access through WebTV. The procedure produces a

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[5]We also manipulated whether or not a person was told that after the information-seeking task they would be required to defend their vote choice. The effects of this manipulation on participation were miniscule for the dependent variables of interest here and thus these conditions were pooled.

TABLE 1 The Impact of Induced Emotions on Political Participation.

Variable	Campaign Participation B (SE)
Anger	.29 (.16)^
Fear	.09 (.15)
Enthusiasm	.07 (.16)
Constant	1.06 (.11)***
R^2	.01
N	407

^p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; *** p < .001, by two-tailed test. *Data Source*: Lab experiment run in fall 2004. *Note*: Entries are unstandardized ordinary least-squares regression coefficients. Emotion variables are dummies for experimental condition. Dependent variable is a count of the number of participatory acts the respondent indicated he/she would undertake: place a bumper sticker on car or wear a campaign button, volunteer to work for a campaign, attend a rally, talk to other people about how they should vote, or donate money to a campaign.

nationally representative sample. Participants are generally asked to complete one survey per week.

Respondents from the Knowledge Networks participant pool were invited to participate via e-mail. They were told that the study was designed to record their opinions about current issues and politics. The preelection wave of the panel was administered between October 22 and November 3, with the election occurring on November 4. Of the 1,184 people who were invited to participate, 617 completed the survey for a cooperation rate of 52%. The postelection wave took place between November 12 and November 20. Of the 617 respondents who completed the first survey, 82% also participated in the second wave. Given the election climate, we were concerned Republicans might disproportionately drop out between waves. This was not the case, as mean partisanship across the two waves was statistically indistinguishable.

The preelection study contained a wide range of emotion measures—12 in all—including alarmed, hopeful, angry, sad, proud, afraid, excited, disgusted, depressed, happy, nervous, and outraged. This permits us to build composite indexes of emotions rather than relying on single measures. Respondents were asked, "Generally speaking, how do you **feel** about the way things are going in the country these days? Please tell us how much you feel each of the following emotions." Respondents reported whether they felt each emotion extremely, very, somewhat, a little, or not at all. Each item was recoded to run from 0 to 1, where 0 means not at all and 1 means extremely. These measures are superior to those appearing in the American National Election Studies for two reasons. First, they cover a much wider array of emotions. Second, and

more importantly, they focus on "the way things are going in the country these days" rather than on specific candidates or parties. We hope to tap general emotional states, not simply substantive evaluations of specific candidates or parties.

A factor analysis of the 12 items revealed three factors: angry, disgusted, and outraged comprised the first. Afraid and nervous comprised the second. Hopeful, proud, and happy comprised the third. Other items (alarmed, sad, depressed, and excited) loaded on multiple factors, so these were excluded from our measures of anger, anxiety, and enthusiasm.[6] We estimate the effects of emotions in the preelection wave on self-reported participation in the postelection wave.

Table 2 illustrates the impact of anger, anxiety, and enthusiasm measured in the preelection wave on reported political participation in the postelection wave of the 2008 campaign. As before, our dependent variable is an index of political participation which sums the total number of participatory acts reported by the respondent after the election. The measure used in this study is more extensive than that common in the ANES and used in our experiment. Three additional items (signing a petition in person or on the Internet, helping register people to vote or get them to the polls on Election Day, and taking part in a political protest) were available. Our results are virtually identical when we employ the more limited (five-item) measure.

In order to isolate the effects of emotion on political participation, we control for all available dimensions of the CVM and its relatives (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). The major dimensions of the model are resources, political interest, institutional involvement, and mobilization. We are able to tap the first three dimensions quite well with this dataset. We control for resources with measures of education, employment status, income, age, and efficacy. Each of these taps material or cognitive resources that might be useful for figuring out how to participate and having the wherewithal to do so. Age is included in the resource block, in keeping with other CVM analyses, because it is correlated with wealth and experience. In addition to having the material and cognitive capacity to participate, one must also have the trait-level motivation to do so. Long-term political engagement is tapped with measures of habitual interest, strength of

[6]The results of the factor analysis are available upon request from the authors.

TABLE 2 The Impact of Emotions on Political Behavior (2008 National Survey)

	Campaign Participation (OLS) B (SE)
Emotions	
Anger	.13 (.03)***
Fear	−.07 (.03)*
Enthusiasm	.03 (.03)
Resources	
Age	−.02 (.03)
Education	.12 (.04)**
Income	.01 (.03)
Internal Efficacy	−.02 (.02)
External Efficacy	.07 (.02)**
Unemployed	−.02 (.03)
Political Interest	
Political Knowledge	.003 (.03)
Strength of Party Identification	.03 (.02)^
Habitual Interest in Politics	.17 (.03)***
Social Involvement	
Church Attendance	.02 (.02)
Union Membership	.03 (.02)
Own Home	−.04 (.02)*
Other Demographic controls	
Female	.01 (.01)
Black	.04 (.03)
White	−.03 (.02)
Constant	−.11 (.04)**
R^2	.24
N	*452*

^$p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ by two-tailed test.
Data Source: 2008 Election Study. Entries are unstandardized ordinary least-squares regression coefficients. Dependent variable is a count of up to eight participatory acts the respondent indicated he had undertaken. All independent variables are coded 0–1.

party identification, and political knowledge. Habitual interest in politics is a measure of general attention to public affairs.

Strength of partisanship ranges from Independents with no attachment to partisans strongly affiliated. Also important are the civic skills acquired from membership in social institutions including work-based, religious, and residency-based groups. Social involvement is measured here with union membership, church attendance, and home ownership. Union members and those who own their own home are also more likely to be recruited for political activity and contacted by partisan groups than nonmembers of similar class status. Churches often engage in political recruitment and provide basic democratic skills. Unfortunately, we do not have measures of direct party

contacting in the 2008 election study. Demographic controls for gender and race are also included. Question wording is available in the online appendix.

The set of controls in this model intentionally makes for a very conservative test of the emotional mobilization hypothesis. If emotions help to foster interest and engagement in politics to begin with, then those controls will capture the indirect effects of emotion, leaving only their direct effects in these models. Still, while we are interested in the internal causal ordering of the entire model, we first need to establish a direct and independent impact of emotions on participation.

Table 2 shows that anger is strongly positively related to participation in the 2008 election. Anxiety, on the other hand, is significantly *negatively* correlated with participation. Enthusiasm is again positively but insignificantly related to participation once the CVM is controlled. These results show that anger powerfully mobilizes, while the impact of enthusiasm is weak. Furthermore, anxiety may, under some circumstances at least, be demobilizing.

Study 3: Looking Across National Election Studies

While study 2 offers a more extensive set of emotion measures than are available in the ANES, it concerns only one election and does not contain the full complement of controls that have been examined in previous studies. To replicate our test of the impact of discrete emotions on political participation, we utilize the ANES presidential election time series from 1980 to 2004. These studies comprise all the elections in which emotional reactions to candidates or parties were measured. They also provide wide variation in historical context. Candidates, party incumbency, economic climates, and foreign policy salience differed across these elections. Finally, the ANES contains an even wider array of controls relevant to the CVM than were available in the 2008 study.

Our dependent variable, *nonvoting participation,* is a count consisting of self-reported engagement in acts other than voting. In this case we use all five participation items available. We also divided these items into two variables for "costly" and "cheap" participation. Talking to others about voting and wearing a button comprise "cheap" forms of participation, because they require little effort or resources. We constructed the dichotomous variable *Cheap Participation*

where 1 represents participating in either of these acts and 0 represents nonparticipation. Attending a rally, working for a campaign, and donating money are more costly. *Costly Participation* is coded 1 if at least one of these activities was undertaken and 0 otherwise. Forty-three percent reported having participated in any act, 38% reported participating in at least one "cheap" activity, and 14% reported participating in a "costly" act.

Respondents were asked whether either candidate had ever made them feel afraid, angry, proud, and hopeful. We summed reactions to both candidates and then rescaled to a 0 to 1 range.[7] *Enthusiasm* combines the measures of pride and hope, while measures of *angry* and *afraid* are composed of one item each. We distinguish between the negative emotions of anger and anxiety, but not the positive emotions of hope and pride for two reasons. First, our primary interest is in differentiating between the impact of anger and fear in response to political threats. Second, positive emotions occur when things are going well, so we expect both pride and hope to be mildly mobilizing.

Our measurement strategy (combining emotional reactions to both candidates) is the most appropriate option available with these data for two reasons. First, our theory involves the impact of emotions across targets, not simply evaluations of the in-party or out-party candidate. Second, this technique is common in existing work on emotions in the literature (Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Marcus et al. 2000; Rudolph et al. 2000). If these measures are simply rationalizations of substantive views, combining emotions toward opposing parties or candidates should produce scales that do not predict participation. If these are simply measures of attitude strength or intensity, different emotions should produce roughly the same effects.

We use the maximum number of controls available in all the years emotions were measured. We again include controls for the major dimensions of the CVM: resources, political interest, social involvement, and mobilization. Our resource block includes variables that represent one's material and cognitive ability to overcome the costs of participation. We control for educa-

tion, income, English speaker, unemployment, age, and political efficacy. As before, unemployment is expected to have a negative impact on participation, so unemployed respondents have one point subtracted from their resource score. Again *political interest* includes measures for habitual interest in politics and strength of party identification. In addition, ANES respondents were asked to list all the specific reasons they have for liking or disliking both parties. Our measure sums the party likes and dislikes for each party. This variable has been used to measure knowledge and political interest (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1993).

Components of the *social involvement* block include union membership, employment, church attendance, home ownership, and length of residence in a community. We include employment here because, as with union and church membership, the workplace is a central locale of political recruitment and skills acquisition.

Finally, in any election, parties and campaigns must work to mobilize the electorate. Contact by parties and candidates can provide citizens with information as well as participatory opportunities (Rosenstone and Hanson 1993). *Mobilization* is indicated by a measure of contact by a party or candidate. Since such efforts are often most intense in areas where the election is close, we include perceived closeness of the election as a measure of mobilization. In addition to the blocks of conceptually related variables, we also include controls for race and gender. As before, these controls are organized in blocks for presentational purposes. Our main goal is to test whether, controlling for all the main dimensions of the CVM, emotions can still play an independent role in participation.

Table 3 displays coefficients from an OLS regression in which the number of self-reported participatory acts has again been regressed upon emotions toward the candidates, controlling for the large set of variables already known to affect participation. This time, anger and fear have large and significant effects on participation even after controlling for the CVM. Enthusiasm again is positive but does not reach statistical significance. This null result contradicts previous findings (Marcus et al. 2000), and is probably due to the extensive controls we have introduced here. Again, this makes for a very conservative test of the emotional mobilization hypothesis. As expected, many of the variables in the CVM exhibit strong associations with participation.

These results confirm our predictions about anger. Anxiety, however, is significantly positively associated with participation in this study—and to

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[7]This technique is standard in research on emotion (see Marcus et al. 2000). We attempt to account for cognitive factors that may be associated with feelings of anger or fear toward both candidates by controlling for political engagement. Replicating these results in an experiment—where emotions were independently manipulated—and the 2008 election study where emotions were measured without reference to specific candidates or parties make us more confident that we are capturing emotional states as opposed to substantive evaluations of these attitude objects.

TABLE 3 The Impact of Emotions on Political Behavior Controlling for Resources (ANES 1980–2004)

	Participation Beyond Voting (OLS) B (SE)
Emotions	
Anger	.16 (.03)***
Fear	.16 (.03)***
Enthusiasm	.05 (.04)
Resources	
Income	.11 (.05)*
Education	.16 (.05)**
English speaker	−.03 (.10)
Unemployment	.09 (.05)*
Age	−.28 (.07)***
Internal Efficacy	−.07 (.04)*
External Efficacy	.15 (.02)***
Political Interest	
Habitual Interest	.51 (.03)***
Party ID Strength	.19 (.03)***
Party Likes & Dislikes	.57 (.06)***
Social Involvement	
Employment	.02 (.02)
Church Attendance	.05 (.02)
Length of Residence	−.01 (.03)
Home Ownership	.04 (.02)
Union Membership	.03 (.02)
Mobilization	
Party Contact	.34 (.02)***
Care Who Wins	.10 (.02)***
Other Demographic Controls	
Female	−.07 (.02)**
Black	−.03 (.04)
White	.02 (.03)
Constant	−.24 (.11)*
R^2	.20
N	8291

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$ by two-tailed test.
Data Source: ANES Cumulative File presidential years 1980–2004. Dependent variable is an index of up to five participatory acts respondent indicated he would undertake including. All independent variables are coded 0–1.

approximately the same degree as anger. One possible explanation for this result is that these measures, relying as they do on emotional reactions to specific candidates and parties, are somewhat noisy and imprecise indicators of general emotional states. Perhaps they also tap a general arousal or opinion intensity, not a specific emotional reaction to the political environment. One further test might help us decide whether these effects are indeed due to specific emotional states. We have theoretical reason to expect anger will be a powerful predictor of *all* forms of participation, including costly ones, while anxiety might boost only the most expressive and least costly forms. To investigate this possibility, we analyze the "cheap" versus "costly" participation separately.

Since there are few actions in the "cheap" and "costly" participatory forms, we use logistic regression to estimate the probability of engaging in at least one of either type of activity. Table 4 confirms our suspicions. In the first column, we examine relatively low cost, expressive participation: talking to others and displaying a button or bumper sticker. In this case, all three emotions show significant effects above and beyond controls for the CVM. When we translate these logistic coefficients, we see that anger and anxiety both boost the probability of engaging in at least one "cheap" act by about 16%. Enthusiasm has a smaller effect, boosting the probability by only 8%.

In the second column we examine more costly political activity: attending a rally, donating money to a campaign, and working for a party or candidate. Here anger and enthusiasm, but not anxiety, show significant effects—confirming our expectations. Anger increases the probability of undertaking at least one costly act by around 4 percentage points. Given that the baseline probability of undertaking one of these more intense political activities is only 7%, the impact of anger is substantively quite large. The difference between the coefficient for anger and anxiety in this model is statistically significant. Enthusiasm boosts these types of activities by about 3%. These results confirm that distinct emotions, and anger in particular, appear to boost participation in politics.

We next examine whether these emotions interact with political skills and resources. We expect anger and enthusiasm to mobilize *most* when resources and skills are available. In Table 5, we collapse the entire CVM into a single variable by summing all the controls. This omnibus variable is then interacted with each emotion to determine whether the impact of each emotion is conditional on total skills and resources. While we are wary of scaling items in this way, we feel it is appropriate for three reasons. First, interacting each emotion with each control variable would produce a table with over 60 coefficients. Many of these would be highly multicollinear, and therefore impossible to interpret. We do not, for example, know what it would mean to say anger interacts positively with income once you control for education and the interaction between education and income. Second, all the control variables are positively correlated with each other, sometimes quite

TABLE 4 Emotions as a Stimulus for "Cheap" versus "Costly" Participation, Controlling for Skills and Resources (ANES 1980–2004)

	"Cheap" Participation Logistic B (SE)	"Costly" Participation Logistic B (SE)
Emotions		
Anger	.52 (.08)***	.37 (.11)***
Fear	.57 (.08)***	.14 (.11)
Enthusiasm	.26 (.10)**	.27 (.13)*
Resources		
Income	.07 (.14)	.74 (.19)***
Education	−.11 (.13)	1.25 (.18)***
English speaker	−.14 (.27)	.25 (.45)
Unemployment	.19 (.12)	.17 (.18)
Age	−1.53 (.18)***	.86 (.26)**
Internal Efficacy	−.07 (.10)	−.17 (.13)
External Efficacy	.24 (.06)***	.53 (.09)***
Political Interest		
Habitual Interest	1.28 (.08)***	1.22 (.12)***
Party ID Strength	.42 (.08)***	.43 (.11)***
Party Likes & Dislikes	1.28 (.16)***	.95 (.20)***
Social Involvement		
Employment	.07 (.07)	−.08 (.09)
Church Attendance	.13 (.07)*	.13 (.09)
Length of Residence	−.19 (.08)*	.18 (.11)
Home Ownership	.08 (.06)	.19 (.09)*
Union Membership	.10 (.06)	.01 (.08)
Mobilization		
Party Contact	.56 (.06)***	.74 (.07)***
Care Who Wins	.44 (.06)***	.21 (.10)*
Other Demographic Controls		
Female	−.19 (.05)***	−.19 (.07)**
Black	−.09 (.11)	−.04 (.16)
White	.19 (.09)*	−.11 (.12)
Constant	−2.07 (.30)***	−6.05 (.50)***
Pseudo R^2	.14	.15
N	8313	8299

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$ by two-tailed tests.
Data Source: ANES Cumulative File presidential years 1980–2004. Dependent variable for the first column is a dichotomous variable indicating whether respondent would undertake either of two "cheap" political acts: talking to others to convince them how to vote or wearing a button/putting a bumper sticker on his/her car. The dependent variable in the second column is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the respondent would undertake any of three "costly" participatory acts: attending a rally, donating to a campaign, or volunteering to work for a campaign. Entries are logistic regression coefficients. All independent variables are coded 0–1.

highly. The Cronbach's alpha for the entire set of controls is .51. While not a highly reliable unidimensional scale, these individual items comprise additive and somewhat distinct predictors of participation. A third reason for combining all the dimensions of the CVM into a master index is that we have no theory about which subdimension *in particular* should interact with each emotion. We expect anger, and to a lesser extent enthusiasm, to interact with many of the elements of the CVM. For example, income, education, employment, experience in the commun-

ity, and general levels of interest all can be "put to use" by the individual in the course of participating in politics. Anger, we think, will be a powerful catalyst for a variety of resources and skills.

Table 5 supports our expectations. Notable is the total lack of impact for anger in the absence of skills and resources (indicated by the baseline coefficient). The interaction between the CVM and anger, however, is positive and highly significant. Enthusiasm logs a smaller but still significant impact in interaction with the CVM. Anxiety, as expected, delivers

TABLE 5 **The Interaction of Emotions with Total Skills/Resources on Political Behavior (ANES 1980–2004)**

	Participation Beyond Voting *B* (SE)
Anger	−.20 (.12)
Fear	.22 (.13)
Enthusiasm	−.10 (.14)
Total CVM	1.48 (.15)***
Anger*CVM	.96 (.23)***
Fear*CVM	.10 (.25)
Enthusiasm*CVM	.53 (.27)*
Female	−.10 (.02)***
Black	−.02 (.04)
White	.02 (.03)
Constant	−.30 (.07)***
R2	.14
N	8288

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 by two-tailed tests.
Data Source: ANES Cumulative File presidential years 1980–2004. Dependent variable is a count of up to five participatory acts respondent indicated he would undertake including: wearing a button or putting a bumper sticker on his/her car, attending a rally, talking to others to convince them how to vote, donating to a campaign, volunteering to work for a campaign.

an insignificant boost to participation and does not interact with resources. In general, then, our final hypothesis is supported. Anger, and to a lesser extent enthusiasm, substantially boost the participatory impact of skills and resources.[8]

Discussion and Conclusion

Our results suggest that anger can powerfully motivate political participation, especially in interaction with the skills and resources that dominate current theories of participation. It is important to recognize the unique role emotions can play in the participatory dynamics of campaigns and elections, because most resources are constant across elections and thus cannot explain changes in participation from year to year. The experience of recent elections, when large

[8]In response to one of the reviewers, and because we were ourselves wary of the use of a master index the CVM, we also produced additive subindexes composed of all items within each block presented in Tables 3 and 4. Interactions between anger and each subindex in the CVM produce very similar results. All four interactions are positive, suggesting that anger facilitates the positive impact of resources, interest, social involvement, and mobilization. The interaction between anger and resources, interest, and mobilization were statistically significant at p < .05 by a two-tailed test. Full results of these analyses are available upon request from the first author.

numbers of habitual nonparticipators from both parties have gotten involved, reminds us just how substantial these effects can be.

In contrast with previous literature, however, we also find important distinctions between the effects of anger and other emotions. In an experiment where emotions were induced independently, we find anger, but not anxiety or enthusiasm, significantly boosts participation. In our 2008 survey, we find anger to be positively linked to participation, while anxiety actually decreases participation and enthusiasm has little effect. Finally, in the ANES pooled data, anger, enthusiasm, and anxiety are positively associated with participation. However, the effect of anxiety is confined to less costly participatory actions. On the other hand, anger and enthusiasm motivate costly forms of participation as well. Skills and resources are important, but the motivating power of anger and to a lesser extent enthusiasm, in combination with such factors, dramatically boosts participation.

The strongest finding across these three studies involves the consistent positive impact of anger. While theories converge on the power of anger to generate action, different theories posit different effects for anxiety, and this inconsistency is borne out in our data. Across our three studies, anxiety has a null, negative, and positive effect on participation, respectively. While anxiety may affect some types of participation under some circumstances, this emotion may be less mobilizing than previously suggested.

Normatively, these results suggest yet another reason to question the loud condemnations of "negativity" and emotionality in politics (Geer 2006). Anger in politics can play a particularly vital role, motivating some people to participate in ways they might ordinarily not—even if they have the ability and opportunity to do so. Our results do not contradict the basic conclusions of the CVM model (Verba et al. 1995). Regardless of one's emotional state, skills, interest, resources, and elite mobilization efforts facilitate political action. However, anger, and to a lesser extent enthusiasm, may lead citizens to harness these skills and resources in a given election. Therefore, animating emotions, and the dynamic processes by which they are produced in each campaign, may powerfully alter electoral outcomes.

Acknowledgments

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